

From: Commanding Officer, USS ASHLAND (LSD 48)
To: Director of Naval History (N09BH), Naval Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard,
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Subj: 2004 COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVIST 5750.12G

Encl: (1) Command History

1. Per reference (a), enclosure (1) is forwarded.

USS ASHLAND LSD 48 COMMAND HISTORY FOR 2004

1. Command Composition and Organization:

- a. Mission: Amphibious warfare; designed to transport Marines and their combat equipment to designated areas throughout the world, and then to launch and support assault landing craft and helicopters during amphibious operations ashore.
- b. Organizational Structure: Assigned to Commander, Amphibious Group TWO, Little Creek, Virginia.
- c. Commanding Officer: Commander Gary Boardman, USN
- d. Homeport: Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Norfolk, Virginia.

2. Chronology:

YARD PERIOD NORSHIPCO	01 JAN – 17 FEB
UNDERWAY	17 FEB – 23 FEB
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	23 FEB – 03 MAR
UNDERWAY	03 MAR - 04 MAR
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	04 MAR – 07 APR
UNDERWAY	07 APR - 09 APR
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	09 APR - 12 APR
UNDERWAY	12 APR – 16 APR
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	16 APR – 19 APR
UNDERWAY	19 APR – 23 APR
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	23 APR – 26 APR
UNDERWAY	26 APR – 30 APR
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	30 APR - 10 MAY
UNDERWAY	10 MAY – 14 MAY
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	14 MAY – 21 MAY
UNDERWAY	21 MAY – 27 MAY
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	27 MAY – 1 JUN
UNDERWAY	01 JUN – 03 JUN
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	03 JUN – 07 JUN
UNDERWAY	07 JUN – 18 JUN
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	18 JUN – 26 JUL
UNDERWAY	26 JUL – 30 JUL
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	30 JUL – 23 AUG
UNDERWAY	23 AUG – 31 AUG
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	31 AUG – 13 SEP
UNDERWAY	13 SEP – 16 SEP
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	16 SEP – 12 OCT
UNDERWAY	12 OCT
IN PORT YORKTOWN, VA	12 OCT – 13 OCT

UNDERWAY	13 OCT – 18 OCT
IN PORT PANAMA CITY, FL	18 OCT – 22 OCT
UNDERWAY	22 OCT – 28 OCT
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	28 OCT – 16 NOV
UNDERWAY	16 NOV – 23 NOV
IN PORT LITTLE CREEK	23 NOV – 31 DEC

USS ASHLAND started the New Year in the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard for a rehabilitation period. During this yard period, ASHLAND's CPO Mess received a visit from the Force Master Chief. ASHLAND also held numerous General Quarters drills, Force Protection Training Team drills and also had a CTRA visit and a SIMA ship test.

The month of February, ASHLAND was preparing to leave the shipyard and return to full operation. During this critical time, she completed dock trials, had a fast cruise and held Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) training. She also had an ATG CTT, complete with a Light-Off Assessment. (was it successful?) When ASHLAND returned to sea after departing Norfolk Naval Shipyard, the underway period included a degaussing run, Basic Engineering Casualty Control Exercise (BECCES) and an intelligence exercise.

In March, ASHLAND spent a short two days underway. While in port she hosted NJROTC students from Churchland High School and members of the 180 Royal Canadian Cadet Squadron. She also went through a Continuous Maintenance Availability (CMAV) and an Initial Assessment on the Engineering side. ASHLAND families celebrated the spring holiday by hosting a spring fling at the North Carolina House on Naval Station Norfolk.

The month of April, CMAV continued until the ship went back underway for the first of many underway periods for the month. During the first underway period, she conducted LCU embarks and debarks. During the month's second underway period, ASHLAND conducted junior officer ship handling, numerous Engineering evolutions and helicopter operations with HM-14. The month's third underway period the crew participated in numerous Mission Orientated Protective Posture (MOPP) drills, a CMWD shoot and ATPF Phase. April's final underway period consisted of an underway replenishment, complete with an emergency breakaway.

USS ASHLAND remained busy during the month May, between going underway and conducting the semi-annual Physical Readiness Test (PRT). The May underway periods included numerous Engineering evolutions and drills, flight deck operations for deck landing qualifications (DLQ's), a NIXIE stream and Combat Systems Training Team (CSTT) scenarios.

June was a busy month for USS ASHLAND with two underway periods. These periods included extended Emission Control and Satellite Vulnerability exercises in preparation for the next period, Combined Joint Task Force Exercise (CJTTFEX). During CJTTFEX, the crew conducted day and night LCAC operations, driver training, BECCES, VBSS boarding drills and Anti-Terrorism Force Protection (ATFP) drills. Upon her return to home port after a successful CJTTFEX, ASHLAND's Deck Department began the evolution of applying a fresh coat of nonskid on the flight deck.

The month of July, ASHLAND celebrated with their families once again at the ship's picnic, held at Seal Park on Naval Amphibious Base (NAB), Little Creek. Also while in port, ASHLAND conducted VBSS and ATPF drills. At the end of the month, she went underway. During this underway, ASHLAND conducted a Stream NIXIE, BECCES and small boat attack drills.

August included the Navy Tactical Planning Conference, Battle Group In-Port Exercise and VBSS drills. ASHLAND also conducted the inaugural Adopt-a-Highway clean-up on Shore Drive right outside NAB Little Creek. When USS ASHLAND headed for an underway period at the end of the month, they conducted BECCES, a Replenishment-at-Sea, DLQ's and a Marine on-load which included Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) launch and recovery operations.

ASHLAND remained busy the month of September with another PFT. Aside from the PFT, she had a Computer Network Vulnerability Assessment, Damage Control Olympics and about 100 NJROTC visitors from high school's in North Carolina and Georgia. The short underway in September included DLQ's, a Stream NIXIE and BECCES, not to mention a successful buoy mooring.

The month of October found ASHLAND's crew enjoying a port visit to Panama City, Fla., for the National Defense Industrial Association Conference. Prior to heading down to Panama City, there was business to be done. ASHLAND made her way to Naval Weapons Station Yorktown, Va., for ammunition on load. En route to Panama City, ASHLAND conducted BECCES, CSTT drills, an Abandon Ship drill, a burial-at-sea and FAM fire. While in port in Panama City, ASHLAND hosted the conference reception, which was attended by RADM Rubin Bookert, Commander Amphibious Group Two. On the return trip from Florida, ASHLAND's crew was hard at work again conducting BECCES, VBSS drills, River City exercises, CHAFF fire, TSSE, extended emissions control drills and DTE.

November ASHLAND found herself underway again but not before the First Class Association sponsored a highly successful bowling party at the NAB Little Creek Bowling Alley for the crew. During the underway, ASHLAND conducted a night steaming package, DLQ's with the Marines, VBSS and small boat attack drills.

One of December's highlights was the ASHLAND Holiday Party held at the Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. During the holiday leave periods, ASHLAND was able to fit in a CMAV, prior to completing work-ups for the early 2005 deployment.